1. A high performance diet is often the key that athletes need to help them get that extra edge over their competition. Invest some time into planning so that you can perform to the best of your ability. On your mark, get set, plan - for good nutrition!

2. For most athletes, it is almost impossible to meet the nutrition requirements with less than 3 meals and 2-3 snacks each day. Eating regularly (every 2-4 hours) helps to maintain blood glucose and energy throughout the day and through practice. A mistake athletes often make is thinking that they don't have to eat adequately on "non-workout days." These "off" days should be treated as "refuelling days" and athletes can take advantage of having more time to prepare well-balanced meals.

3. Carry a sports bottle with you all day and continue to refill it with water to stay well hydrated.

4. Plan ahead for nutrition success. Do not assume that the recreation center/school will offer healthy food choices for you.

5. If you want to do better at something, no matter what it is, you practice, practice, practice. Competing in sports is no different. You train and work hard to become better at your sport so make certain that you do not sabotage all of your hard work by eating an unhealthy diet. What you eat and drink greatly impacts your performance!

The Athlete's Nutrition Danger Zone

The food choices found at most fast food outlets and recreation centers can sabotage your sport performance. These foods are high in sugar, fat or sodium and may contain little to no nutritional value. These are items such as slurpees, pop, energy drinks, potato chips, cheezies, taco chips, candy, poutine, french fries, chocolate bars, chocolate covered granola bars, etc.

For example, one of the latest fads is taco salad in a bag. Although it sounds healthy, they are high in fat, salt, and calories and generally not recommended. Another example is commercially made smoothies which can have as much as 530 calories and 77 grams of sugar in one serving. These foods certainly do not benefit a performance athlete.
Fueling up for Competition

Eating before competition
When eating before training or competition there are a few simple guidelines that you should follow:

- Know your own body and experiment with the timing of meals and snacks to ensure peak performance.
- A general rule is to eat a meal 3-4 hours before an activity and then a snack 1-2 hours before an activity. This is just a general rule, so experiment with your own body.
- Do not introduce “new” foods on competition day.

Healthy high-carbohydrate snacks for competition day:

- Whole-grain ready-to-eat cereal with low-fat or skim milk
- Low fat fruit flavored yogurt
- Peanut butter on whole wheat bread and ½ an apple
- Lean meat on pita bread with ¼ cup orange juice
- Crackers and cheese strings and a box of raisins
- Low fat frozen yogurt and 100% grape juice
- Oatmeal raisin cookie and low fat milk
- Low fat pudding, a mini bagel and 100% apple juice

Before activity, choose white or low fibre foods because you want foods that will release quick energy not high fiber foods that slow digestion. High fibre foods are recommended for all other times besides before an activity.

Eating during the Games
Choosing foods during an activity depends on how long of a break you have to refuel:

- Short Break- For ongoing activities, chocolate or white milk, a sport drink, or a cup of 100% fruit juice. These drinks are beneficial because they provide carbohydrates in fluid form, which make them easier to digest as well as provide quick energy and they are convenient to pack along.
- Longer break- Choose fruit, granola bars, or ½ bun with peanut butter and jam. These can be beneficial in providing carbohydrates for fuel.
- 30 minute break or longer, athletes should eat a small meal to help them recover. Examples of meals could include a sandwich with a glass of milk, a bowl of soup with a bun, etc.
Eating after competition

Refuel within 15-20 minutes after your activity with a healthy snack. The key to athletic success is the post recovery meal. This is because you need to refuel energy stores immediately after any intense exercise as this will impact next performance. Within this time, your muscles are most receptive to replacing lost fuel. An athlete should eat a quick snack of carbohydrate-rich foods or drinks 15-20 minutes after finishing an exercise.

Refuel after the Game: To ensure proper refueling of the body have a well balanced recovery meal within 2 hours after exercise combining both complex carbohydrates (pasta, bread) and protein (chicken, peanut butter). The best way to refuel your body after long, strenuous endurance exercise is a 4:1 combo of carbohydrate and protein. While solid foods can work, a drink such as chocolate milk may be easier to digest making it easier to get the right ratio and meet the two-hour window.

Top 12 convenient recovery snacks to be eaten within 15-20 minutes after activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Banana - apple - orange</th>
<th>Sport drink</th>
<th>Fruit and Veggie Bar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature Valley Granola bar</td>
<td>Chocolate milk</td>
<td>PB and Banana sandwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail mix with added dry cereal</td>
<td>Fruit or applesauce cup</td>
<td>Instant breakfast shake or Fruit Smoothie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Muffin</td>
<td>Fruit to go bars</td>
<td>Yogurt or Cheese String</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of recovery meals to eat within 2 hours of exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Entrée</th>
<th>Sides</th>
<th>Beverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chili</td>
<td>Baked Potato</td>
<td>Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwich</td>
<td>Veggies</td>
<td>100% Juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef Tortilla</td>
<td>Veggies</td>
<td>Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donair (reduce the sauce)</td>
<td>Rice and Veggies</td>
<td>Chocolate Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaghetti with meat sauce</td>
<td>salad</td>
<td>Fruit Smoothie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearty hamburger soup</td>
<td>Whole wheat bun</td>
<td>Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wraps: Chicken or Beef, Veggies</td>
<td>Yogurt and apple</td>
<td>100% fruit juice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Need some more information?

Ask your coach for some sport specific nutrition tips that will help you further with getting your nutrition game plan on track to fueling your body for sport success. Whether you play volleyball or soccer, hockey or dance, there are specific nutrition strategies that you can use to make the best of the food you eat in terms of performance on the day of competition or practice.
Healthy Recipes for Athletes

Easy Breakfast Shake
1 cup low-fat milk
1 cup low-fat yogurt
1 cup frozen fruit (strawberries, bananas, blueberries, etc)
Blend milk and fruit in a blender and enjoy!

Low Fat Banana Bread Recipe
2 large eggs
¾ cup sugar
3 large ripe bananas, mashed
½ cup nonfat buttermilk
1 Tbsp. canola oil
1 Tbsp. vanilla
1 cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup white whole wheat flour
2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Spray a loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray. Beat eggs and sugar together in a large mixing bowl using an electric mixer. Whisk in bananas, buttermilk, oil and vanilla. Sift together flours, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a small bowl. Fold into wet ingredients. Buy 1 litre of nonfat buttermilk and freeze extra in 1/3 cup portions.
Makes 16 slices
Per slice: 130 calories, 2 g fat (0 g saturated), 27 mg cholesterol, 36 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 3 g protein, 1% Vitamin A, 2% Vitamin C, 5% calcium, 5% iron

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